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John Muir Newsletter, January/March 1985

Holt-Atherton Pacific Center for Western Studies

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JOHN MUIR NEWSLETTER



Holt-Atherton Pacific Center
for Western Studies

University of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif 95211

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EDITORIAL STAFF: RONALD H. LIMBAUGH, KIRSTEN E. LEWIS

WINDING DOWN THE PROJECT

Shortly you will receive a flyer from Chadwyck-Healey, Inc. announcing the availability of the John Muir Papers on microfilm. We had hoped to have the microfilm edition ready by the time of the special John Muir Conference at the University of the Pacific on April 12 and 13. Instead, the flyer will have to serve until the final snags are worked out in filming and indexing. To date, all except the correspondence has been filmed. Two computer typists are working on the data input for the filmed series, but keying the control cards and frame numbers is a slow and laborious process. Our targeted publication date is now July 1.

UOP MUIR PAPERS REOPENED FOR SCHOLARLY USE

Muir scholars once again have access to all original papers in the Muir collection at the University of the Pacific except for the correspondence series which is still tied up due to the delayed filming schedule. However, a preliminary microfilm copy of most correspondence is available now and can be borrowed on interlibrary loan. To assist in research, the control cards for all Muir papers is also available as an index and guide to the 12,000-item collection.

THE FUTURE OF THE JOHN MUIR NEWSLETTER

This modest publication began in 1980 as a means of keeping Muir scholars abreast of progress in gathering, editing and publishing the Muir papers and correspondence. With that project coming to an end, the fate of the newsletter hangs in the balance. We propose to merge the Muir newsletter with the revived Holt-Atherton Center newsletter which will begin this fall. It will have an expanded audience and will highlight news and information on activities of the Center. Because the Muir papers are a major component of the Holt-Atherton collections, naturally John Muir will continue to have his day in future Holt-Atherton newsletters.

We would appreciate any comments or suggestions on this proposed merger. The alternative would be to continue a special Muir newsletter, but the current editorial staff will no longer be available once the microform project concludes. Do we have any volunteers?

A LETTER FROM CANADA TO CALIFORNIA MUIR FANS

It is now 116 years since John Muir spent his "First Summer in the Sierra." The year 1984 was the 70th Anniversary of his death, and 1988 will be the 150th Anniversary of his birth. Is it not proper then, to consider commemorating these landmarks to remind ourselves of his accomplishments and continuing influence on our lives and times? Should we not perhaps reconsider our stewardship of some of the places he especially loved and which so influenced his life and writing as well as his later conservation accomplishments?

I propose a plan to stimulate interest in the history of present land use of natural sites along the route he described so vividly in his trek with Don Delaney's sheep and Carlo, his St. Bernard companion in 1869. Would it not be interesting to trace his wanderings from the San Joaquin Valley and Twenty Hill Hollow, up past the oak-woodland and chaparral of the Coulterville region, through the pine and oak forests of the North Fork of the Merced River, with its saxifrage borders and alders, to Brown's Flat in the ponderosa pine belt, and on through the great sugar pine, white fir and giant Sequoia woods to the sub-alpine forests, and the shining granite domes and crags above Tuolumne Meadows?

In re-reading Muir's My First Summer in the Sierra, as well as the condensed version in The Gentle Wilderness, with its beautiful photographs by Richard Kaufmann, I became interested in trying to locate Brown's Flat on present day maps of the region. Inquires I made in other quarters having failed to locate the elusive Brown's Flat officially, I corresponded with Muir's bibliographer, William Kimes of Mariposa, California, and he kindly referred me to Marilyn Borges of Turlock, California. She was able to confirm that the McCauley Ranch is the place known as Brown's Flat in Muir's time. The site is located on Stanislaus National Forest maps at Section 221, Township 2 South, Range 18 East, Mt. Diablo Meridian.

For various reasons, some people may not want attention drawn to this area, but it seems to me that the Sierra Club, the Yosemite Natural History Association, or some other group might well initiate a project to delineate on a map and perhaps on the ground by historical markers, or even ultimately by a trail or bicycle parkway at least some of the route Muir took in 1869 into his "Range of Light."

With the recent resurgence of interest in Muir's life and his lasting influence on the development of conservation ideas and the so-called environmental movement of recent times, it would seem timely to consider such a project. From this distance, I am not in a position to promote such a concept, but perhaps the thought may appeal to Muir fans of central California who are more in a position to take appropriate action. If Muir truly is the "greatest figure in California history" his 1869 trek surely deserves commemoration.

Philip G. Haddock
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CLIPPING FROM THE MUIR COLLECTION

(Editor's note: Muir's ability to mesmerize a mixed audience is underscored in this undated and unmarked clipping found in the UOP Muir family collection. It probably appeared in a Pasadena paper about 1895.)

AN EVENING WITH MUIR

The Great Geologist Receives at The Home of His Friend

Never has writer gone to a happier task than that of reporting the reception Wednesday evening to the great geologist, Professor John Muir, at the home of his friend, our good citizen, ex-Mayor T.P. Lukens. Messrs. Muir and Lukens are warm personal friends, owing, probably, primarily to the common sentiment of a love of nature and secondarily to long association in the mountains where Mayor Lukens spends about one quarter of his time and Mr. Muir all of his.

So Mr. Muir being down here, content to rest his pinions for a brief period at an altitude of something less than ten thousand feet above the sea, and camp on ground that is neither glacier nor moraine - so far as we know, he was of course Mr. Lukens' guest and nothing more natural to the generous nature of the latter than that he should divide with his friends the pleasure of meeting him. So to the beautiful home of the ex-mayor, corner Marengo and Walnut, trooped Wednesday night, not all of his friends, for no house is big enough for that, but such number as his modest home would shelter, and there they found an evening's pleasure never surpassed and rarely equalled in the lives of any.

For there was the man most famous in the world of all in his line of thought and action, whose intimacy with nature has made him a household word wherever she is loved, and so intimately identified with her grandest expressions that his name belongs inseparably to them.

He is a plain pleasant man of over average height, full beard and kindly face, of Scotch birth and look, and withal that modest, almost bashful manner that characterizes him who is so thoroughly a scholar as to be indifferent to everything else. To him then was presented each in turn in the hospitable parlors of Mr. and Mrs. Lukens, and when all had been comfortably seated Mr. Lukens announced fault for the best expression did their charming entertainer go on with his story of his mistress' charms, with whom he was thoroughly in love, and in a few minutes the party were surprised to hear the clock strike ten. Then they realized that they had been in the presence of a magician, and that he had lulled them to sleep while he told them the story of the world. The birth of glaciers and the erosion of continents, the chimes of icebergs and the artillery of the sea - all flowed so beautifully from the master's lips that the bashful man became an orator and the awkward pedant the most charming poet. To attempt

to brief Mr. Muir's remarks would be to do them an injustice, for nothing short of his own beautiful style and charming manner should be known with the lesson, and besides the effort would be too great for any space that could be devoted to it. He has written many magazine articles, at the urgent solicitation of publishers - for, as he himself explains, he is too busy to write, and to these the reader is referred for whatever he may have found time to put in print on the subject.

At the conclusion of his remarks refreshments were served, and then Mr. Lukens invited upstairs all who had not already seen them to view his collection of curiosities, and many were surprised to find there one of the finest private museums they had ever seen. Indian baskets and other articles in lavish profusion, skins, rugs, geological specimens, etc., all are there in a plenty and variety that is the result of years of patient collection, world wide travel and the most unstinted expense.

To Mr. Lukens' thoughtfulness his friends are indebted for one of the richest treats of their lives, and to the kindly hospitality of Mrs. Lukens and her daughter, Mrs. E.E. Jones, are due a charming evening's sociability that will never be forgotten.

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